

AN
ORATION
DELIVERED
BY REQUEST OF THE CITY AUTHORITIES,
BEFORE
THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,
ON THE
SIXTY FOURTH ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,
JULY 4, 1840.

BY THOMAS POWER.

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1840.

CITY OF BOSTON.

In the Board of Aldermen, July 13, 1840.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to **THOMAS POWER, Esq.**, for the eloquent and patriotic Oration, delivered by him, before the Municipal Authorities, on the fourth instant, being the Anniversary of American Independence; and that the Mayor be requested to ask of him, a copy for the press.

Sent down for concurrence.

JONATHAN CHAPMAN, Mayor.

In Common Council, July 16, 1840.

Read and concurred.

LEMUEL SHATTUCK, President pro tem.

A true copy—Attest,

S. F. McCLEARY, City Clerk.

O R A T I O N .

THE startling thunders of the deep toned cannon are rolling from hill to hill, from city to city, and from state to state. The folds of our nation's flag are proudly flung on the four winds of heaven. Countless voices respond to each other their cry of joyousness. The warm current courses through the veins with quickened motion, and the deeds of other days rush upon our recollections with all the freshness of passing events. We have assembled with thoughts consecrated to God and our country, and have mingled the solemnity of religious supplication with the vows of patriotic devotion. These are the demonstrations of a national jubilee: the anniversary offerings of the birth-day of a great and happy and free people.

The causes for all this intensity of feeling and exhibition of common interest, involve a discussion of all the memorable acts that led to the Declaration of Independence, of all the events that passed in the days of the great struggle for freedom, and of all the practical principles and political theory that enter into the organization of a purely representative republic.

The Anniversary of American Independence! If there is one heart within these walls that does not feel its best impulses come welling up from its deepest recesses, its best hopes for the continuance

of our institutions awakened, and its best resolutions to defend them confirmed, that heart is any thing but American. It is not the voice of the startling cannon that booms over every plain, nor the festal dances of night-fires that rise from every hill, nor the echoing cry of exultation that swells from the voices of sixteen millions of people; but it is the steady resolution that respects the equal operation of the laws of the land; that deep spirit of religious feeling that places its trust in the good Providence of God; that intelligent and firm purpose that renews its fealty in support of the great constitutional provisions of our government; that proud elevation of a freeman, who, when he clearly sees the invasion of these great principles, dares to combat manfully in their defence:—these indicate national feeling.

We come up here, not to decree a triumph to some successful usurper over the people's rights, but to renew the obligations we owe to the principles which carried our fathers through the days of the revolution, and which have raised our favored land to a degree of prosperity unparalleled in the history of nations. We come to consult on the principles that develope and protect our interests in commerce, agriculture and the arts; and, above all, to consult on the principles that go to the preservation of our free political institutions.

We assemble, not more to retrace the glorious deeds of our fathers, than to transmit to our children the spirit of the free institutions they planted here. The past is full of events rich in stimulants to the pride of the citizen, and to the admiration of the freeman. But the future will require all the supervision of intelligent experience, added to the

maxims of wisdom which our fathers left us, to control the tendencies that lead either to an abandonment of the simple elements of our government, or to a concentration of power dangerous to the continuance of free institutions.

It is grateful to meet on one joyous day of national jubilee, when all party feelings and bitter animosities are buried, at least while we unite in rendering the homage of profound veneration to the patriots who secured to us the blessings of a free government. It is grateful to meet where the quiet influence of religious regard shall control all the discordant elements of party bitterness.

No one can well understand the springs of New England habits, manners, and feelings, or comprehend our civil, social and religious condition, without reverting to the days of the pilgrims. The history of the little band of the May Flower is an epoch in the history of man. It is a theme which, for its daring enterprise and magnificent results, puts at defiance all the speculations of political philosophy, and all competition of bold adventure. Nothing but the unquenchable love of civil and religious freedom could have matured and carried through that bold undertaking. Three thousand miles of a wintry ocean would form a barrier to any ordinary enterprise. But this little company, on an unpromising coast, and on a comparatively unpromising soil, planted a colony eminently characterized for ardent attachment to religion and laws.

The religious impulses that carried the armed population of Europe to Palestine, to recover the venerated land of the cross and the sepulchre, had mingled with them the most foreign associates:

popular superstition, military ambition, and love of conquest. There, the purity of christian sympathies was dimmed not only by an association with bad passions, but with criminal excesses. Here, the motives to enterprise were, the rights of religious belief and of self government: freedom to worship God, and to make their own laws. Other nations have gone through the process of civil war and revolution to the same end. Here, a colony was planted with principles that formed the index to all subsequent proceedings, up to the Declaration of Independence.

The solicitude of the early settlers was not more clearly demonstrated in providing for themselves by the security of their personal rights, than in providing for posterity by making ample provision for the interests of learning. They believed that for a people to be virtuous and happy, they must be intelligent. It was one of the anomalies of New England's infancy, to make her school houses the first monuments of her prosperity; and the proudest monuments of her maturity are her public provisions for the education of the whole people. In this is the ark of political safety. The more intelligent the whole people, the less material is there for the operations of political intriguers, and the less danger of the triumph of a political despot. Ignorance and corruption are the elements that the worst parties of the worst times always combine, to carry out their schemes of popular operation for selfish purposes. The same general intelligence that gave to the first settlers the power of detecting and controlling domestic influences inconsistent with their personal and civil rights, also gave them a keen per-

ception of the initiatory proceedings of the mother country to reduce the rights of the colonists to mere nominal privileges.

That the project of raising a revenue from the colonies should meet with determined resistance, was a thing of course; and the stamp act and the tea tax only accelerated events necessarily growing out of the relations between England and the provinces.

The precautionary measure of collecting military stores at Concord, was in keeping with the jealous foresight of the resolute leaders of the day; and the movement of the royal troops to destroy them, was in keeping with a determination to crush every effort toward the maintenance of the growing spirit of insubordination. In that adventure, the first blood in the great drama of the revolution was shed. Lexington and Concord were the theatres of martyrdom. Instantly, the latent energies of a whole people, from one extreme of the country to the other, were roused to action.

The same spirit of independence that led the pilgrims to the rock of Plymouth on the 22d of December, 1620, brought to maturity that Declaration of Independence which was made at Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1776.

Up to the moment which severed the last tie that bound the colonies to England, our recollections go back with all the pride of a noble ancestry, and with all the freshness of renewed gratitude. Never did a nobler band of determined patriots act with more solemn obligations. If unsuccessful, they saw the fate that awaited them, and knew that their names would be treated by the minions of power

with the grossest ignominy. But their confidence was firm in the day of trial, and their faith was unwavering in the Providence of God, to carry them through the struggle. And they did go through that struggle, gloriously for themselves, for the welfare of their country, for the cause of civil liberty, and for the just rights of man throughout the world; and that successful struggle will have its important bearing through all time. History is doing justice, and will for ever do justice, to the firm, devoted, intelligent and grave signers of the great charter of our liberties, at once the pledge of their integrity, and the hope of rational freedom.

The jealousy with which the old confederation was formed, leaving it a weak compact, without the main attributes of a government, and deficient in its powers to secure political liberty, was indicative of the watchful spirit that pervaded a large class of the population. It cannot now be a matter of surprise, that they whose feelings had been trained in a series of years of privation and suffering, and whose ardent thirst for liberty commenced with resistance to a power claiming to impose taxes where the consent of the people through their representatives was not required, should, in the outset, guard against the surrender of power not absolutely necessary to the administration of public affairs, and should resist the concentration of authority in hands from which it could never be withdrawn, except at the price of blood and treasure. The experiment satisfied a majority that the confederation was too feeble, and that a new constitution was necessary. The descendants of those daring ancestors who won from royal authority that noble charter from which En-

glishmen date the proudest triumph of principle, formed on another continent a second charter, as proud a monument of secured rights and political wisdom as the first great charter.

When the defects of the confederation were perceived, a convention was held to form a new constitution, with provisions based upon the powers requisite to preserve the union, but at the same time reserving to the people all their just rights. Never was a moment more eventful in its probable consequences!

The great division of opinion was on this point: how much to yield, and how much to retain. This point in political history had been settled heretofore by force and violence, or by accident. But here, the novel spectacle of a people quietly and judiciously adopting a new constitution was presented to the admiration of the world. How far they were successful, succeeding time has shown. The few changes that have been made, after all our experience, form the highest tribute to the sagacity and integrity of that excellent body of men who matured that instrument.

Almost within hearing of the enemy's cannon, and almost within reach of their bristling bayonets, they had matured and put forth a summary of rights not more remarkable for its bold outline of political wisdom, than for its wise consistency with practical freedom. There never was a deliberative body of men uniting more of the great qualities that dignify human nature. No other body of men ever united so much of personal intrepidity and of intellectual power. They presented a spectacle, by their exposition of principles, which, for moral sublimity,

stands alone among the memorable acts of government, and which is unapproachable by any counterpart, for its adaptation to the great purposes of national prosperity. What the fitful flashes of the polar lights are to the splendor of a meridian sun, the miniature examples of republics in ancient days are to the magnificent structure that is eminently the home of civil liberty, and a defence of human rights. What the great Athenian philosopher endeavored to illustrate in his theories on an ideal republic has been practically matured in the new world, in the successful results of a real republic.

Who shall sufficiently describe, who can ever imperfectly feel, the conflicting thoughts that arose in the hearts of that memorable band that signed the Declaration! On one hand, the colonies become degraded and oppressed for their manly resistance to assumed powers and prerogatives; on the other, the glorious prospect of a free nation, whose liberties should be identified with the high and generous principles they felt and avowed. On one hand, the rebel's reward of treason; on the other, the patriot's reward of success.

In discussing the events and circumstances of the revolution, it has been a favorite topic of indignant reproach to speak in denunciatory terms of the timid who refused to bring their energies into the struggle, and of the opponents who endeavored to counteract the efforts of the daring spirits of the times. But now that the events of that doubtful contest can be looked upon dispassionately, the surprise is, that so few should be found base enough to desert the cause in which the wisest and the best were engaged, to obtain a successful issue, or die in the at-

tempt. It was no holiday work then. Without an army, without a navy, without munitions of war, the finances in a disordered state, commerce annihilated, and agriculture and the arts paralyzed in their operations;—this was the condition of the colonies when called upon to defy the gigantic power of that government which had been united to us by many common bonds of interest, with an immense armament at sea, and with hosts of well appointed and well disciplined troops. Who would not pause at such an eventful crisis, where success might secure only an imaginary right, but where defeat must entail the forfeitures and penalties of unsuccessful rebellion!

There is sometimes a proud reaction from the barren denunciations that sought to stigmatize the fearless leaders in the ranks of the patriots of those days; a reaction honorable alike to the principles involved in that discussion of rights, and to the parties who were the subjects of royal anathema. When General Gage issued his proclamation offering pardon to all who would return to their allegiance, he made an exception of two names, so identified with the events of those days, that the history of the times repeats them on every page. John Hancock and Samuel Adams were the distinguished exceptions to royal favor; and no exemplification of titular honors, no patent of nobility, ever conferred imperishable distinction on two names with more successful results, whether for their endurance on the page of history, or in the hearts of their countrymen.

It is said of a noble Roman lady, that when asked for her jewels she produced her two sons. "These," said she, "are the only jewels of which I can

boast." In the days of the revolutionary struggle, our country had no jewels to boast of but her sons; but every American mother was a Cornelia; and, inheriting from the pilgrims a proud spirit of independence, and awakened to action by their general intelligence, the mothers brought to the altars of liberty the dearest objects that twined around their hearts; and when their country, in its peril, required the sacrifice, they stood forth, and, like the noble Roman lady, proclaimed, "Here are our jewels;" and they added, "may they live with the independence of their country, or die with her hopes on the battle-ground of freedom." Never was there a nobler race of women. Possessing all the self-devotion of ancient dignity, and all the gentleness of modern refinement, they offered to God and their country all that the ancient matrons offered to stoical ambition or maternal pride. History has done them imperfect justice. Our fathers have received the just reward of a nation's gratitude for their deeds in battle, and wisdom in council; but the mothers have not received the just tribute of admiration for their generous devotion and heart-rending sacrifice.

The stirring agitations of battle, the pride of conquest and the awarded wreath of victory are not among the elements of woman's ambition; but her duties have more the attributes of moral greatness, as they have not the stimulants of the warrior's gay plume, the loud huzza of the multitude, nor even the last honors of the sculptured monument.

That the government of the United States has sometimes been deemed not sufficiently strong to resist the force of popular commotion, never was so distinctly exhibited as in the days of republican

France, when it was attempted to join the power of the United States and France against Great Britain. And one of the most perilous periods for the due maintenance of the uncontrolled sovereignty and national dignity of our new formed government was the moment when Washington, in defiance of domestic and foreign influence, issued his proclamation of neutrality. No event can more fully illustrate the dangers of a refined speculation in the theory of government, or of the facility with which the extremes of the principle of popular rights unite with the spirit of licentiousness, than the fact that the representative of republican France dared to resist the head of our own republic in an official act. The nation that set up reason as an idol, and that adopted the liberty-cap as a national emblem, would almost, in our struggle for the right of self-government, have compelled us to worship the same idol, and adopt the same emblem. Our own proud eagle might still have supported the national escutcheon, but his strong grasp would have been upon the chains of vassalage, and the lightning of his eye would have been quenched in darkness. The history of that time is a signalised beacon to practical statesmen and practical patriots, that political rocks and quicksands lie near the surface of the tempestuous ocean of liberty, and that the same healthful breeze that fills the sails of the fair ship of the constitution may dash it on the hidden enemies that surround it.

The results of revolutions have so often been adverse to the interests of civil liberty, or to any gain for humanity, that it is not only with national pride, but with grateful recollections in behalf of all the

great interests of mankind, that we retrace the results of our Declaration of Independence. By our free institutions, individual rights in the security of life and property are amply secured, not so much by operation of law, as by the general intelligence, honest industry, and virtuous habits of the people. The theory of government formed and sustained exclusively for the maintenance of individual happiness and the public good, is every where understood and carried into practice. The interests of education are of paramount consideration. The equality of political rights is recognized in our written constitutions. Qualifications for all offices of honor, trust or emolument, are capacity and integrity. The ordinary course of industry and economy insures competency, and good habits insure respectability. Every citizen is a part of the creative power in the gift of all offices, and is eligible to all. By the blessing of God, we have a climate favorable to health, and to vigorous mental and physical action. By the wisdom and foresight of our fathers, we inherit institutions unequalled for their adaptation to the great purposes of humanity, civil liberty and personal rights.

However the past may have been marked by feelings of the most unfriendly nature between the people of the United States and of Great Britain, the age of bitter and acrimonious feelings has passed away. No benefit to either country can now result from a revival of the ancient causes of ill will. How many common ties now bind the two nations together! A common origin; the same language, manners and religion; the interests of education; and the same love of constitutional liberty, and well defined and settled law.

If the past has been checkered with the perils of war and rivalry, and national jealousy, the present is full of promise, that the interests of the two countries, in all the relations of commerce, philanthropy and letters, are better understood, and that the antagonist position of these nations is no longer to be seen, except in the honorable competition which shall fulfil, to the highest possible degree, the destinies of a mighty people, in the true enjoyment of science, religion and civil liberty. And among the promises for the continuance of our amicable relations, may be placed the connexion by steam navigation, and the recent arrival, from England, of the first steam packet at our city. No Bostonian could have looked upon that glorious spectacle without a feeling of laudable pride, and a deep anticipation of hope that the prospects of successful enterprise would be fully realized. No one could look around on our lovely bay, and not feel an additional throb of patriotism. Our ample wharves lined with thousands of gratified spectators; a beautiful sheet of water studded with countless gay barques; our ships in their gayest attire; the welcome of the pealing cannon rolling from shore to shore, and the welcome of countless voices borne in loud huzzas across the placid waters; the flags of two countries floating together in their broad folds, and in their intimate, friendly relation; a noble ship of our own country giving forth its charming music; and the welcome visitor to our waters, the first of her description from the land of our fathers, dashing onward in the pride of her station, and in the power of that mighty principle which is effecting its favorable influence on the commercial, social and political re-

lations of the two countries! Who could contemplate that glorious spectacle, and not feel an additional impulse in his recollections of the interests of humanity, of his country, and of his own fair city of Boston! This is not the glowing offspring of imaginative creation. Its end is not the temporary structure of fancy, but the maintenance of commercial relations, not more important to the interests of the counting-room, than to the interests of the workshop, the halls of learning, and the halls of legislation.

The connexion by steam power is in effect a treaty between two great commercial nations; not a treaty formed by diplomatic agents, but created directly by the spontaneous action of the people; not a treaty formed on technical conditions, but erected on the popular basis of our commercial and social interests. Three thousand miles of ocean no longer divide the two countries; but a great highway is formed, where the sea-bird has had his home. One element at least—the mighty winds that have hitherto swept that broad expanse of waters—is now overcome by a mightier dominion under the controlling genius of man.

In the naval battles between the ships of the United States and England, and in the battles on land between the armies of the two countries, the contest has always been fearful. The aphorism of Greek meeting Greek, as a sentiment of personal prowess, is no longer the highest illustration of a contest of brave spirits. It has been Anglo-Saxon against Anglo-Saxon; and a firmer purpose to manly deeds, and a firmer arm to sustain them, were never seen. The disgrace of defeat has therefore

been qualified by the consideration, that the victor inherited the same ancestral claim with the vanquished ; and when the star-spangled banner and the cross of Saint George have been placed in antagonist relation, the same blood stimulated the resolves of manly courage, and the eagle and the lion alike inspired with their proud daring the descendants of a common, chivalrous ancestry.

Among the peculiarities of the present age is the immense amount of legislation. It is a proof neither of the wise application of past experience, nor of sagacious foresight, to propose the intervention of written law for the correction of every supposed or temporary evil. Nor will any legislation be remarkable for its wisdom, in after times, which has its origin in stimulated and fiery passion.

The great evil of legislating on individual cases and for individual interest, always leads to palpable conflicts that in turn soon require to be themselves corrected by legislation. Besides, the popular will is not always perceived until after legislative action ; and then the popular feeling repudiates the original necessity for such intervention. The action of legislative bodies is, or should be, the expression of public opinion. No man or body of men can, in a delegated capacity, long resist its power. Like a mighty torrent, it will sweep away all that oppose its onward course. Whenever the popular voice is disregarded, they who sustain official relations to the people are not the servants, but the masters of that people. And wherever clamorous pretensions to patriotism and ostentatious promises of regard to popular rights are found, there the most busy in the

display of patriotic virtue will be the first to yield to some counteracting agitation.

There is another peculiarity of the present day: the art of creating public opinion, or of creating what appears to a cursory observer to be opinion. As individual influence has declined, the operations of men in masses seem to have increased. And in this way, artful intriguers and designing demagogues have operated so successfully as to create an impression that the public pulse beat in sympathy with their schemes of temporary attraction and petty ambition. When such influences push public bodies into legislative action in which private rights are disregarded, there can be no worse results of a factious spirit, and no cause can be more efficient in producing a distrust of the capacity or the integrity of legislative bodies.

Other operations have sometimes been successful in effecting a particular course of action. Monuments of the joint creation of corruption and folly have sometimes been suffered to remain on the statute-book. But they have been mostly swept away by the indignation of the people, and men afterwards have wondered not more at the fierce spirit which produced the experiment, than at the pusillanimity that yielded to it.

It is not to be concealed, that with all the diffusion of general intelligence, there is a growing impatience of wholesome restraint. Written constitutions are treated as the temporary expedients of a people, to be made or unmade, in each succeeding day, as passion or caprice may dictate. Laws do not remain long enough unchanged to obtain regard either for their soundness of principle, or for their practical re-

sults. And not the least of the evils growing out of this constant change is the contempt that is indulged for legislation. A positive, partial evil is preferable to such constant changes; and the last place where experiments are warranted is in the constitutional and legal provisions that involve the great interests of the country.

The theory of men's equality, and the principle of the right of private judgment, are making strange practical commentaries, by the exciting conflicts to which they give rise, and by the displays of fierce passion which grow out of these abstract principles. Unless intelligently comprehended, they lead to insubordination to authority and laws, and to a disregard for social order.

It is no uncommon thing for him who intends to be a dictator, not to say a tyrant, to begin with the attractive excitements and bold expositions of a demagogue. One of the most illustrious instances to show how power may be attained, without regard to the principle that the people is the only true source of power, and that the general will should control public affairs, was seen in the extraordinary elevation of Oliver Cromwell to the executive power of England. It was by the union of military force and religious fanaticism, the most dangerous union that could well be imagined, and which must result in the worst form of despotism, as the blind zeal of spurious religion would sanction the boldest and bloodiest excesses of the bayonet.

For the agitator's reprehensible course of proceeding, who seeks to put in action the conflicting elements of society, who appeals to bad passions, distrusts and jealousies, no very honorable opinion can

be entertained by him who desires to better the condition of man; and above all, that mischievous policy is to be reprehended, that seeks to array the poor against the rich, and the ignorant against the intelligent. The inflammatory elements of suspicion and jealousy are sufficiently unrestrained, without the intervention of bad designs, intended to obtain temporary success and popularity, through the employment of means ruinous to the public welfare.

The artful demagogue, with selfish or traitorous purposes, in haranguing on liberty and equality, denounces the inequalities that industry and study have made, and, appealing to the worst passions of the worst classes of society, irritates their jealousies, and places those less favored by nature or less fortunate by circumstances, in a hostile relation to others more favored and more fortunate. In all time, those having the most unworthy ambition have always entered upon their bad designs by using language and pursuing conduct to entrap the ignorant and improvident into a temporary confidence, the consequences of which are most injurious to popular rights.

So much has recently been said about the democratic principle, that it is proper to consider whether in theory or practice, any organized party in our community may justly assume to be most intelligent or most devoted. There is a technical use of the phrase which is so indefinitely comprehended by any analysis of principle, or so remote, by its ultraism, from any practical purpose, that there can be no imputation of uncharitableness in the supposition that many who are clamorous in its praises have no clear idea of the principle, nor a very comprehen-

sive perception of its applicability even to our own institutions. We, as a whole people, are agreed upon certain leading principles, which, whether technically called democratic or not, are the main pillars and the main supports of our political fabrics, and form the true basis upon which every free government must rest. 'The true source of all political power is the people. The only true director of this power is the public will. The only true purposes of government are personal happiness and the public good. These axioms embrace the theory of our government. In these are concentrated the democratic principle which no one, possessing a regard for our political institutions, will controvert. But not to rely upon abstractions, let us see how these axioms are maintained in their practical application to our national and state constitutions; in other words, how the democratic principle is there carried out. The depositary of executive power emanates directly from the people by a popular ballot. The periodical returns of elections reserve to the people the right of displacing this depositary at pleasure. The depositaries of legislative power are also emanations directly from the people; and to guard against the influence of temporary excitements, which are not always the index of the public will, one branch of the legislative power is so formed as not to be cotemporaneous with the other in its term of office. The depositaries of judicial power are created by the executive, but subject to termination on impeachment before the representatives of the people. No branch of government can exist against the public will. If there is any other form of the democratic principle, or any other develop-

ment of its properties than these, it may be that the claim to its exclusive possession is warranted. But for any new discoveries of a subtle, impracticable principle, a refinement upon speculation not adapted to purposes of political science, very little regard will be had for the arrogance of the claim, and very little respect for the integrity of the claimant.

In the beginning of the Declaration of Independence, we find this memorable exposition: "We hold these truths to be self-evident:—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." The preamble to the constitution of the United States is, "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America." In the constitution of Massachusetts, the commencement of the preamble is, "The end of the institution, maintenance, and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic, to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it with the power of enjoying, in safety and tranquillity, their natural rights and the blessings of life: and whenever these great objects are not obtained, the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness." In all these is recognized this prin-

ciple, that all power is from the people, and is conferred only for the good of the people.

Coming to the constituents of the three different powers, executive, legislative and judicial, there will be some difference of opinion as to their universality or restriction. Their universality would embrace paupers, idiots, and adult wards. Probably no one, in the madness of defending natural rights, would extend the principle to imprisoned felons, and yet, the claim of pure, natural right would extend to them. The principle must be either restricted or unrestricted; and if unrestricted, it is not well seen why its extreme will not lead to these absurdities. Unrestricted natural right embraces the action of every man, woman and child in the country. It includes as well one sex as the other; as well the weakness of childhood as the imbecility of age. These are not the exaggerations of refined theorizing, but are the results of unrestricted natural right, as certain as the deductions of mathematical science.

There is no secret in the mode of proceeding by which designing and selfish men may mislead a portion of any population. There is a charm in the very name of liberty, that comes home to the heart and to the pride of every human being. But liberty unqualified is licentiousness. Natural liberty leaves men to act without restraint; civil liberty leaves them to act without restraint, except to the injury of others or to the public. Natural liberty and government, therefore, cannot exist together; the very terms are inconsistent with each other. The bad use of the word, liberty, in the mouth of one intending to operate upon inflammatory passions, cannot fail to excite those who do not or cannot mark the

line between the fierce promptings of nature, and the regulations of government, social and political. It is not so much the love of liberty, as uneasiness at restraint.

Who then claims to be most intelligent in the subject of popular right, most devoted to its incorporation into our political institutions, most patriotic in its broad application to all purposes of government, and most vigilant in resisting usurpations upon constitutional barriers and legal enactments, made for the preservation of this principle? Who clings to the principles of our Declaration of Independence, and the popular reservations of our national and state constitutions with the most deathless tenacity? Who has made and who will make their manly and untiring resistance against the abridgment of popular rights; resistance alike to the demagogue and the despot? Our own city, we know, and Massachusetts, we know, will raise a hand in the fear of the God of our fathers, and will accept the adjuration that promises to preserve inviolate the principles which are our common inheritance.

There is no greater degree of madness in the councils of a nation, than to depart from those principles of political science which have led to successful results, carrying out practically the true purposes of the institution of government. The fact of experimenting on the leading features that conduce to prosperity, is of itself a positive evil, not only by alienating the minds of the citizens from confidence in the permanence of measures touching municipal rights and property, but also from confidence in the permanence of the political institutions themselves. No more ruinous course can be adopted

than "to consult our inventions, and reject our experience."

Among the subjects that come within the range of past experience, is the due organization of the militia, having three leading objects; "to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions." There is no speculation on the efficacy of a body of citizen soldiers, armed for the protection of their rights, so satisfactory as the illustration of their determined and unflinching courage at Bunker Hill. The war-cry of blood ran from town to town, the trumpet-note of battle sounded from hill to hill, the watch-fires of liberty blazed from mountain to mountain, and the patriotic determinations of a whole people sprang into action at the call.

Never in the best days of feudal obligation, never in the splendid ages of chivalry, did a feeling so impulsive and so devoted prompt to manly action. The farmer, straight from his plough, and the mechanic, direct from his work-shop, resisted for an almost incredible space of time, some of the choicest and best disciplined troops of Europe, flushed with previous victories, and proud of the daring character of their nation. The troops of England conquered in that memorable battle; but it was a conquest that made the bravest captains of the enemy respect the undaunted courage of armed American freemen, and made some of the wisest statesmen of England foresee that the struggle would not be terminated without a series of conflicts that would cost her treasures of wealth and oceans of blood. They foresaw that it would probably rob the national diadem of one of the brightest jewels that ever graced a European monarch. This allusion is not made in the boast of

national prowess, but to render just homage to the militia service, and to mark its efficacy in time of danger. This is not the time for the discussion of this subject; but it may well be asked if the condition of our militia is all that would be desirable in the contingency either of insurrection, invasion, or any general resistance to the execution of the laws. If the amount of legislation and the amount of time devoted to this subject, in our Commonwealth, were to be taken as measures of the interest to protect it and to mature its beneficial operations, it would be supposed that we are aware of its importance for the purposes enumerated in the constitution of the United States. But when it is seen that almost every change has introduced provisions paralyzing to its energies, and depriving the service of its attractions to our young men, it will be felt that the service itself will become a mere name without efficacy, a mere semblance of organization without strength. If ever a systematic design of establishing a standing army in the country shall be attempted, it will be preceded by a successful effort to weaken and destroy the militia. The abandonment of that service, as a national protection, will be the prelude to a concentration of military power in the hands of the national executive.

The people of New England have sometimes been reproached with mercenary feelings, making gain their highest good. But the best answer to an imputation upon our liberality is seen in the existing products of New England feelings, principles and habits: her churches, her halls of legislation, her school-houses, and her colleges. Our climate and soil give no promise of enervating

luxury, nor of heartless refinement; but they have admitted the homely characteristics of industry and frugality. The inspiration of freedom is not found on the sunny plain, but in the invigorating properties of the mountain air. The simplicity of our habits is no warrant to infer pusillanimity, for we dare to look with a steady eye to resist foreign foes, and to lift a manly arm to strike down domestic enemies. Nor are we so wedded to climate or soil, as to mark the limits of our patriotism by geographical lines. The earliest dreams of our youth were mingled with our hopes for the enduring and uninvaded continuance of our free institutions; and the last prayer of our manhood will be for our whole country.

Speculations upon the permanence of the union are not productive of patriotic enthusiasm, nor of patriotic resolution. A doubt is implied in the discussion; and we should as soon speculate upon the continuance of personal integrity, or the permanence of personal virtue. These are topics insidiously designed to weaken our confidence: and this done, one of the citadels of our safety is already thrown down.

The provision made by law for the maintenance of public schools, and for the education of the whole people, is a subject that enters largely into the calculations of the permanence of our institutions. No beautiful proportion, no vastness of architectural grandeur could for a moment rival the proudest monument of our city, in the efforts here made for education. The single fact, that of eight hundred and thirty two thousand eight hundred and fifty seven dollars, the annual expenditure of the last year, one hundred and fifty six thousand one hundred and two dollars were expended for public education, is alone

the highest evidence of devotion to popular rights and free institutions, and is the best pledge that rational freedom will not degenerate here to the level of licentiousness.

The introduction of steam-engines and rail-roads is effecting a revolution next, in importance to human happiness, to the art of printing. When the country shall become intersected in every direction by these facilities to social intercourse between the remotest States of the Union, the perception of our common interest will become more definite, and feelings of nationality will become stronger.

The rivalries or the jealousies of the South and the North ought not to come over the bright dreams of the day, but they form points in the history of our country where the noble emulation of patriotic feeling may be kindled at the parallels of public benefactors in different sections of the country. Virtue and patriotism have no geographical limits.

There is one great name that stands alone, unapproachable, and unparalleled. Already you have anticipated the name of Washington.

In the bright recollections of the past, if we often return to the distinguished names of the North, and tell, amidst a constellation of worthies, of the undaunted courage of James Otis, we return also to the distinguished names of the South, and tell, amidst a constellation of worthies, of the patriotic services of Patrick Henry. The South has had the proud distinction of giving to our country the sagacious statesman who had a leading direction in framing the Declaration of Independence. It is an honor of which the sons of a milder climate may well be proud, and the North has uniformly and ungrudgingly ac-

corded a distinction which has reflected lustre over our common country. We too have our sectional cause of proud distinction. If it required the Ajax of the South to erect that glorious palladium of our country's political safety, it has also required the Achilles of the North to defend its principles. The sagacious son of the South sleeps with the fathers of our country: the brave son of the North is still a surviving benefactor to their children. To the South belongs the fame of the Framers of the Declaration: to the North belongs the fame of the Defender of the Constitution.

To the bland climate, productive soil and generous spirit of the South, we oppose the invigorating mountain air, the persevering habits, the water power and the daring intrepidity of the North. To the broad prairies of the West, dotted with unnumbered herds, and whitened with countless fields of grain, we oppose the broad extent of our sea-coast, its waters dotted with unnumbered ships, and whitened with the canvass that bears them to every ocean and climate. These are the several interests that give a spring to the industry of each. The cotton grower of the South, and the manufacturer of the North, find their interests in the exchange of product and labor; and the agriculturist of the West, and the merchant of the sea-coast, find, in the exchange of their articles, a mutual benefit. All these great interests will be still better understood, and the resources of our country more broadly exhibited, when continuous rail-roads shall intersect the land from North to South, and from East to West. The results of these mingled interests and close intercourse, will be seen in their best forms, in the security and

permanence they will give to the union, and to all free institutions.

In the past, we trace the infant colonies growing into manhood, and forming and encouraging all good institutions, to promote general happiness and the public welfare; resisting all encroachments on their legal and constitutional rights; bravely and successfully contending for the privilege of self-government; and wisely laying the foundations of a great and mighty empire. In the present, we see developed the elements of the freest government: the popular will controlling the complex machinery of public affairs; religion, in its various forms, planting its countless churches, and all with the equal protection of law; learning, in every department, useful and ornamental, literally dotting the land with its school-houses, academies and colleges; our citizens regarded with sentiments of kindness abroad; and our national flag treated with respect on every ocean, and in the remotest corners of the world. In the future, hope points to a glorious inheritance for our children: a vast legislative republic, with principle to counteract the schemes of ambition, with intelligence to preserve their political integrity, and with virtue to trust still in the God of their fathers.